



School Report from State Senator Glenn Grothman

Sex Education for Wisconsin's Children: Why 2009 Act 134 Must be Repealed

2009 Act 134 is the most significant change to Wisconsin's sex education law in a generation. It applies to students in kindergarten through twelfth grade, and promotes that young people are expected to be sexually active. The leading proponent of this bill was Planned Parenthood. It was sponsored by Senator Lena Taylor (D - Milwaukee) and Representative Tamara Grigsby (D - Milwaukee).

While Act 134 allows the discussion of abstinence in classes, it bars abstinence-only instruction. The Act will not let school districts teach abstinence without teaching condom and contraceptive use, even if a district wants to offer a class emphasizing abstinence due to popular demand.

Previously, local school districts had Advisory Committees to decide what should be included in their school district's sex education curriculum. Parents and pastors were encouraged to serve on these Advisory Committees. Now, Act 134 preempts parental and local input and mandates what is taught. It requires that curriculum be recommended by national liberal groups including the American Public Health Association, which has taken the extreme position of being in favor of partial-birth abortion.

Act 134 requires that instructors have no bias when teaching captive teen audiences about having sex before marriage. Any instruction that says homosexuality or sex before marriage is considered morally wrong is taboo.

Although parents may opt their own children out of this curriculum, the instruction will change the next generation's morality, and lower any sense of personal responsibility in making decisions.

School districts have the option to not teach Human Growth & Development classes according to Act 134 rather than have the state mandate Planned Parenthood-style sex education be provided in local classrooms. However, if they do so, they must refrain from teaching on this subject altogether!

On the Senate Floor, bipartisan amendments were offered to include education on fetal development, to allow parents to opt their children into classes instead of out, to allow districts to solely teach abstinence if they so chose, etc. Each of those amendments was defeated along party lines.

One amendment that was adopted requires sex education instruction to include teaching the criminal penalties for underage sexual activity and the potential lifetime consequences of Wisconsin's Sex Offender Registry. Although Act 134 does not allow the curriculum to pass judgment on early sexual activity, our state criminal statute clearly does.

There are two views of sex education for underage children. One view is that sexual activity by unmarried teens is wrong. This is the view of Wisconsin's criminal code which in fact states that sexual activity with someone under age 16 is a felony and could put someone on the Sex Offender Registry for life. There is also the view which implies that sexual activity is inevitable, even among very young children, and that we must focus on having them use contraceptives and learn about "safe" sex (all emotional issues aside) so they do not reproduce and keep their babies at an even greater expense to the state (as if there can be a cost-benefit analysis attached to human life). This teaching is a direct assault on the moral fiber of Wisconsin's youth, families and the integrity of marriage, and is why it is vital that 2009 Act 134 be replaced with legislation that reaffirms childhood, personal responsibility, parental rights, and local control in determining what type of curriculum is taught in the classroom.